AI TRANSLATED

The fluorescent tubes of D. Flavin, just like some of C. Andre's pieces, can be understood within the type of delimiting sculpture. Both indeed make marks in space; on the floor, in the case of C. Andre; on the wall or in corners for D. Flavin. However, in the former case, questions of mass, weight, and density remain squarely at the heart of the artist's concerns. Even *Lever*, the brick line from 1966, retains the sculptural qualities inherent in this construction material. These are juxtaposed volumes, however insignificant they may be, that draw a line dividing the space, assigning it its own boundaries.

Once activated, the fluorescent tube of D. Flavin, however, loses much of its linear appearance. The light, in fact, far exceeds the configuration of the tube by diffusing into the surrounding space. Resting on a very precise form, the work becomes, despite everything, "formless," as the halo it diffuses, an integral and essential part of itself, proves difficult to define on its own.

The most categorical delimiting sculpture is that of F. Sandback. Like the pieces of C. Andre and D. Flavin, it also experiences two states and only makes sense when exhibited. It does not rely on the placement of objects but presents itself as a line between the floor, the wall, or the ceiling. Its volume is initially reduced to a metal rod, an elastic cord, and later to an acrylic thread. Like the structure of S. LeWitt, it works with space without enclosing it, but it remains, on the contrary, characteristically tied to the event of its installation and to the support of the architecture.

The founding anecdote of F. Sandback's work, in 1966, is well-known. As a student at the prestigious Yale School of Art and Architecture, the artist was struggling with sculptural attempts that were vaguely biomorphic. One of his professors, George Sugarman, then offered this wise advice: "Well, if you're tired of all these parts, why not just draw a line with a spool of thread?" Sugarman pointed him toward the radical simplification of sculptural problems through a blank slate approach. Since sculpture is primarily the mastery of a form in space, he suggested using the clearest, most difficult form (the straight line) and studying its spatial situation in isolation. F. Sandback took him almost literally. He chose wire and metal rods to form the contours of his new sculpture. What these contours would subsequently represent is tied to the art that had, for several years, occupied the critical and artistic scene in America: minimal art.

It is important to note that F. Sandback was studying at an elitist university, deeply influenced by the tradition of European avant-garde, and his philosophical education made him open to the prevailing aesthetic theories. Minimal art represented both a continuation and a transcendence of European formalism. Indeed, studying at Yale, F. Sandback could not help but be influenced by the work of Joseph Albers. In 1965, Albers had left the university, but his teachings, based on the restriction of means, the rigor and precision of forms, still marked the pedagogy there. "You could feel his presence everywhere," recalls F. Sandback. Every day, he had to cross the threshold of the Arts Building, topped by the *Repeat and Reverse* (1963) by the master. This principle of form repetition and inversion of planes, which, according to Albers, was to produce a three-dimensional tension in the drawing, would become one of the driving forces of F. Sandback's art. Thus, when in the spring and fall of 1967, R. Morris and D. Judd came to teach in his sculpture class, preceded by their reputation as theorists and polemicists, their art appeared to F. Sandback as the only valid model for the future possibilities of abstraction. It seemed to embody a formal purity worthy of the Bauhaus legacy, as well as a new, uncompromising, and unprecedented aesthetic boldness.

In fact, his first works in metal wire and elastic cord clearly fall under the umbrella of minimalist structures. The very first outlines the perimeter of a wooden board on the floor and presents itself as the ghostly silhouette of a piece by C. Andre. Others will quickly evoke alignments of cubes or parallelepipeds in the manner of the serial modular developments of D. Judd. From Judd, F. Sandback adopts the idea of a specific object, capable of transcending genres and categories. From R. Morris, he also assimilates the use of the Gestalt concept. On the one hand, D. Judd embodies the pole of the authoritative and autonomous object; on the other hand, R. Morris, with similar means, emphasizes the phenomenological experience. However, this foundational episode took place in 1967, when the field of minimalist objects was relatively saturated, as evidenced the previous season by *Primary Structures*. F. Sandback could obviously not continue along the path of "constructed" objects. He therefore retains the characteristics of some primary structures— austerity, muteness, self-referentiality—but empties them of their material substance, disembodying them.